

NORTHEAST DISTRICT COUNCIL
Thursday, October 3, 2013
7:00 – 9:00 pm
Wedgwood Presbyterian Church
Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order: 7:05 pm by Gabrielle Gerhard

Introductions:

Members: Tony Provine (Ravenna-Bryant), Gabrielle Gerhard (Windermere North), Nancy Bolin (View Ridge), Erin Tighe (Hawthorn Hills), Pam Xander (Hawthorne Hills), Matt Hoehnen (Roosevelt Neighbors' Alliance), Barbara Krieger (Roanoke Park), Jeannie Hale (Laurelhurst), Sue Hildreth (University Park), Steve Wilkins (University District CC)

Guests: Rand Redlin, Liz Wall (YouthCare), Terry Pottmeyer (Friends of Youth), Edna Shim (Children's Hospital), Wilbert Santos (Sound Transit), Rory O'Sullivan (Yes on Prop 1), Jordan Royer (Wedgwood resident, speaking in opposition to Prop 1), Carin Chase (Yes on 522)

Staff: Karen Ko (Seattle Dept of Neighborhoods),

Secretary for the night: Matt Hoehnen

Announcements:

Pam Xander: Magnuson Park Building 30 Open House Celebration, Friday, October 11 5-7pm. See #11 on Jeannie's announcements. Historic space, live music, light refreshments.

Karen Ko: U District Alley Activation launch this Sat, Oct 5, 3-6pm in the alley behind the University Book Store. Specifically, in the alley between University Way NE and 15th Ave NE from NE 41st St to NE 45th St.
<http://udistrictlivabilitypartnership.org>

Steve Wilkins: UW is hosting a forum on open space. Steve attended the first today.

Tony Provine: The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods 25th anniversary celebration at the new MOHAI, 860 Terry Ave N, on Friday Oct 25 5:30-8:30pm. Limited space will require a reservation by Oct 16 at <http://celebrate25.brownpapertickets.com>.

Public Comment:

None.

CNC Report:

Gabrielle Gerhard presented.

CNC hosted a presentation on the city budget. Info available online. City has a positive financial outlook. The rainy day fund approaching pre-recession levels. Expanding number of school camera zones. New position in DON for a liaison between neighborhoods and major construction projects. Ten new police officers.

CNC requests an increase in the number of city-staffed coordinators for neighborhood councils.

Sound Transit Update:

Wilbert Santos of Sound Transit presented.

Sound Transit is starting construction in Maple Leaf for the Maple Leaf Portal around 1st Ave NE and NE 94th St. Northbound trains will exit the tunnel at this portal bound for the Northgate station. Two tunnels will start getting bored heading south to Roosevelt, University and UW Stadium stations. Tailings come out of the Roosevelt station area.

Two open houses: Wed, Oct 23, 6-8pm at Roosevelt High. Thursday Oct 24, 6-8pm at Olympic View Elementary, 504 NE 95th St. Note that one-page handout at the NEDC meeting mistakenly stated the Olympic View open house was Wednesday when it's actually Thursday.

Sign up for monthly newsletter email. Expect updates on a regular basis from Wilbert at future NEDC meetings.

Truck haulage routes are not yet finalized. Haulage routes likely involve NE 50th St, Roosevelt Way, Campus Parkway, 11th Ave NE or Brooklyn Ave NE north to NE 50th St to I-5. Steve complained about the streets being chewed up from heavy truck traffic. Street sweeper to run daily. Sound Transit typically works with the City of Seattle after large construction projects to do reconstruction.

Presentation by Youthcare / Friends of Youth – Refurbishment project update

Terry Pottmeyer of Friends of Youth & Liz Wall of Youthcare presented.

Homeless youth are currently housed in Magnuson Park's three old officers' homes. These homes have suffered from deferred maintenance and are in need of refurbishing. Major systems will be replaced along with roofs and windows. The refurbishment will restore these buildings' historic appearance.

Three transitional housing programs house youth and young adults.

1. One Friends of Youth home houses homeless mothers. Six mothers ages 18-21 years old live in a congregate house, each with a child. Refurbishments will add an ADA unit in the basement to make room for one more mother and child.
2. One Youthcare home houses up to 9 young people who are homeless. Some shared bedrooms today. Refurbishment will make 9 single bedrooms.
3. Another Youthcare home houses 8 people 18-21 years old. Upgrades will add 2 units to this.

Construction is slated to start in March 2014 and finish in October 2014. Seeking public and private funding. Refer to 2 brochures and 8.5x11 handout passed around at the meeting.

Current residents will stay while renovation goes on around them.

Barbara Krieger: How do you find contractors? Public funding mandates a procurement process. Hopefully they receive three bids. Guidelines are followed for work exceeding the \$100k threshold. Work is specified in a very detailed manner for bidding.

Federal, city, county, state and private funds used for this project.

Friends of Youth works with Roots and East Side units to find beds when a young person 18-24 years old is in need. They help the transition from emergency shelter to transitional housing to independent living. They provide a continuum of services.

Nancy Bolin: Is the number of homeless youth increasing? Terry Pottmeyer reports seeing a 46% increase in the last 2 years in homeless youth. Families that were making due were impacted by the economic downturn. A family with multiple children may need to let the oldest one live on his/her own. It's challenging sometimes to transition out of YouthCare facilities if they cannot find work, particularly for those on the younger side, like 18 year olds.

The young mothers in this transitional housing setting can stay for up to 24 months. A 12-18 month transitional housing stay is typical. The goal is to teach parenting skills and such to move to independent living.

Residents of youthcare typically transition out after 12-18 months. They will often return home or move to another transitional housing choice.

Steve Wilkins: Let's not make public decisions about open space based on the lowest common denominator. Some feel that open space becomes a liability when it succumbs to drug dealing and such. Steve asked if one of the presenters would be willing to join the conversation on open space in the University District on behalf of homeless young adults. Liz Wall agreed to join Steve in the UW open space forum.

Proposition 1 Campaign Finance Reform – Presentations from both sides

Rory O'Sullivan, chair of the steering committee for Prop 1. In 2011, twelve entities maxed out their donations to Seattle City Council candidates. Developers seeking a variance, for instance. Prop 1 allows our electeds to focus on what's best for the people, not one's campaign. Seattle was one of the first to create a system of publicly financed campaigns in the 70's. The early 90's brought a state initiative that outlawed this at the local level, creating a more robust public disclosure requirement instead. Public financing is now recently allowed again by law. It has seen tremendous support from elected officials, former electeds, and the League of Women Voters. One sees more diversity among candidates and elected leaders with publicly financed campaigns. One does not need corporate donors to run a campaign. With proposition 1, when you get a donation from a private source, it gets matched 6 to 1 by public funds.

Jordan Royer, a private citizen who opposes Prop 1. Compared to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland. Portland scrapped public financing of campaigns after several cycles because it suffered from fraud and didn't do what it was supposed to. We actually see a higher turnover in Seattle than other cities with public campaign financing. Get your 600 donors, get the 6 to 1 match. Jordan wrote a piece for Crosscut, which he passed out at the meeting. He mentions a number of flaws in this proposition. This will not get money out of politics. Funding comes from a mandatory property tax. It will not increase diversity. Council itself wants this because it makes their campaign jobs easier. It would put more money in the system and into the pockets of consultants or those masquerading as consultants. We should encourage doorbelling instead, which district elections would encourage, but that council does not want.

Rebuttal

Rory O'Sullivan. This caps the cost of elections. Candidates agree to funding limits of \$140k for a primary and \$240k for an election. Data supports public financed campaigns as a means to increased competition. Today's

trend is that Council members look to fewer donors giving more money. Instead, candidates should look at priorities of the people, not those who can write big checks.

Jordan Royer. All donors are in the \$7k-\$8k level. It's easy for an incumbent to tout, "I'm for publicly financed elections" when they get to keep their seat for doing less work on the campaign trail.

Questions

Tony Provine: Doesn't NYC hold elections by district?

Rory O'Sullivan: Yes. District elections don't get money out of pockets.

Jeannie Hale: How is this different from the way Seattle publically financed elections successfully decades ago?

Jordan Royer: Is it a coincidence that this applies only to at-large elections? Ethics in Elections recognizes this doesn't get money out of elections with independent expenditures.

Rory O'Sullivan: This proposition is more robust with a 6:1 match, rather than the 1:1 match from decades ago. Typical campaign costs \$240-350k. This gives candidates who have community support a means to get their message out. Without this you need \$700 checks, ie, from special interests.

Barbara Krieger: Please explain your fraud concern.

Jordan Royer: A candidate gets the money and hires family or friends to put up a website or do any silly thing under the guise of campaign efforts.

Rory O'Sullivan: Portland had a case where a woman listed hundreds of false donors, received public campaign finance money, gave the money to her daughter, and fled town. Our process will be audited to vet donors. We have the opportunity to learn from Portland's mishaps. Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission is a good body to protect this from fraud. They have a video.

Barbara Krieger: I don't support district elections because it amounts to gerrymandering.

Initiative 522 – Labeling genetically engineered foods

The representative opposing Initiative 522 could not attend tonight.

Carin Chase, resident, presented in favor of I-522. Initiative 522 is about transparency and the right for people to have valid information. Initiative 522 requires a label on foods that contained genetically engineered (GE) ingredients. Labeling is restricted to foods intended for human consumption that are already labeled, like chips. GE corn, squash and sugar beets are the relevant products currently. No long term studies exist on the effects of GE foods. GE seed is patented. In a similar debate, proponents had to go to court to get farmed salmon labeled as being farmed and having dye injected into it for color.

The opposition (against I-522) is funded by five corporate donors. Monsanto is the largest corporate donor. Dr Bronners soap is the #1 donor for the YES campaign.

Nancy Bolin: I've heard surprisingly little discussion around why we might not want to purchase GE foods.

Tony Provine: Would this require labeling salmon as farm-raised on a restaurant menu?

Carin Chase: I-522 does not apply to restaurant food on a menu since that's not labeled now. It only applies to foods that are already labeled.

Barbara Krieger: I would encourage reading the recent Scientific American food article. Europe insists on labeling of GE food products. One result in Europe is that farmers have more varieties of seeds available to them to plant.

Carin Chase: Dog food contains GE soy. There are no GE animals for human consumption. If there were, they would be labeled.

Carin Chase: I-522 has overwhelming support from WA counties, labor, many others. This will likely pass. If we don't pass it, it will be a big deal and will stall the national movement. WA is a leader for labeling GE food.

U District EIS Scoping Comments – Draft Letter by Steve Wilkins

Editorial commentary

The University District has undergone a year-long study of land use in anticipation of the University light rail station at Brooklyn Ave NE and NE 42rd St. The city estimates significant population and job growth in the immediate area over the next 20 years. Given the transit investment and growth trends, the city is considering three proposals to better accommodate growth as well as promote ecological living by supporting residential living near jobs in this urban center. Any change to land use (rezoning) requires an environmental impact statement (EIS). The city has commissioned an EIS for the University District to study the effects of two different up-zone proposals and a third proposal that would not change existing zoning. Impacts on traffic and infrastructure (water and sewage capacity) are already criteria to be studied by the EIS.

During the scoping period, public comments may be submitted that argue for, and may influence, taking additional metrics and goals into account by the EIS. For example, one could request the EIS process to assess residential diversity. Given the neighborhood goal of increased residential diversity documented in the UD Urban Design Framework, one might successfully argue for limits on microhousing, since this type of housing typically attracts students, a population already heavily represented in this area. Similarly, two and three-bedroom apartment units can house a family, and hence should be encouraged or even required to some degree. Developers often do not include larger units due to their lower rents on a per-square-foot basis.

Steve paraphrased parts of his draft letter. Steve's letter asks that the EIS consider additional criteria important to the neighborhood in the EIS assessment of several potential zoning alternatives for the University District. These additional criteria include making significant public open space in the heart of the district, achieving a sufficient stock of affordable housing, maintaining quality of life for existing residents in terms of on-street parking availability and preserving the many single family homes, favoring redevelopment in the core urban village sub-area, expanding social services for an aging population, and studying the impact of a potential future elementary school in the district.

Sue Hildreth: Expressed concern that there's no corresponding downzoning on the periphery in exchange for increased density in the core.

Tony Provine: Ravenna-Bryant sent a letter in support of the U District plaza.

Sue: UW owns so much property that a transfer of development rights seems appropriate. This could be one mechanism that allows for public open space by allowing UW to build higher elsewhere.

Tony Provine: Sound Transit, by law, is not allowed to build on top of their stations. They're trying to change the law over this. This is probably why they ceded the above-ground development rights above the University Station to the University of Washington.

Pam Xander: Encourage adding infrastructure like water, sewer, and power in your letter. Projecting forward, we'll see new subsidized housing for the rather poor, and the rest of the new housing will cater to those who are more well-off. Not much will exist for those in the middle. The stronger you can make the letter, the more impactful it will be and the more it will be considered for the EIS. Make it itemized and detailed. Pam added that she writes EIS statements for a living.

Tony Provine: Please use the term "micro-housing" instead of the trademarked term "Apodment" in your letter.

Matt Hoehnen: Please fix the spelling of "light rail."

Steve Wilkins: The EIS scoping comment period has been extended from Oct 7 to Oct 9.

Barbara Krieger motioned that NEDC endorse Steve's draft letter with friendly amendments. Sue seconded. Motion passed.

Steve to send his edited letter to Karen, Tony and Gabrielle by Monday, Oct 7. Karen will be out next week. Gabrielle has time to send this out Monday.

Round Robin:

Karen Ko: Per the request of the co-chairs, Karen invited the SPD to come to the NEDC meetings. SPD has not had a regular presence during Karen's tenure. One lieutenant agreed to come to the December NEDC meeting to talk about the crime prevention. Our former coordinator, Terri Johnston, has moved to West Seattle. The north precinct has no crime prevention coordinator.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.